

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) wants Marylanders who qualify for an economic stimulus payment from the federal government, but have yet to file for one, to know that it is not too late to get their rebate, but the October 15, 2008 deadline is fast-approaching. Eligible citizens must file a 2007 tax return by this date in order to receive the economic stimulus payment this year, even if they normally do not have a filing requirement because their income is too low or not taxable. New Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data released today shows that 74,370 citizens in the State of Maryland have yet to file a federal tax return required to claim their stimulus payment of at least \$300.

“If you haven't yet filed a tax return to get your stimulus payment, you still have time to do so, but you must file by October 15,” **said Rep. Hoyer.** “During these challenging economic times, \$300 or more is a welcome installment for families and individuals trying to make ends meet, particularly those on fixed incomes such as retirees or veterans receiving retirement and disability benefits. It is critical that these checks are claimed in order for the stimulus to work effectively for citizens and for the economy.”

Earlier this year, Congress passed and the President signed an economic stimulus package to provide a much-needed boost to the economy and help stem the financial pain of millions of Americans. Basic eligibility requires a qualifying annual income of at least \$3,000 from, or in combination with, Social Security benefits, Veterans Affairs benefits, Railroad Retirement benefits and earned income. In May, the IRS began sending rebate checks of up to \$600 per individual for eligible citizens who filed a 2007 tax return.

According to the IRS, some retirees, veterans receiving government benefits and others who normally do not file a tax return may be eligible and not know it. New statistics indicate only about 80 percent in these groups are accounted for in the stimulus payments currently being sent, leaving about 4.3 million potential recipients remaining.

In Maryland, the majority of the unclaimed payments are designated for social security recipients and veterans in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Prince George's County. In Maryland's 5th Congressional District, the data show nearly a quarter of citizens in these groups have yet to claim payments:

<u>County</u>	<u>SSA Beneficiaries</u>	<u>VA Beneficiaries</u>	<u>% of SSA/VA Total</u>
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ANNE ARUNDEL	5,037	286	24.4%	CALVERT
897	47	24.4%		1,251
98	22.9%			
PRINCE GEORGE'S	8,994	796	26.7%	
SAINT MARY'S	921	55	22.5%	

To inquire about eligibility, receive help with the filing process, or if you have any other questions regarding the economic stimulus, visit the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov/> or call the taxpayer assistance line at **1-800-829-1040**.

The IRS offers the following tips to ensure timely processing of stimulus payments (From IRS Website).

- **File only one tax return** - People should file only one 2007 tax return. It takes the IRS up to 12 weeks to process paper returns and issue the stimulus payments. However, some people are filing more than one tax return in an effort to receive a stimulus payment, which could further delay their stimulus payment. The IRS is concerned there will be more multiple filings as the Oct. 15 deadline approaches for filing a return in 2008.

- **List qualifying income** - Some people are listing their monthly income instead of annual income. People must list their annual amount of qualifying income to be eligible for the minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 married filing jointly). The qualifying income required by law is at least \$3,000 in benefits from Social Security, Veterans Affairs and Railroad Retirement, earned income and/or combat pay.

- **Review your tax liability** - Some people who have either small amounts of tax liability or no tax liability are getting smaller stimulus payments than they expected or none at all. Generally, the law provided for a maximum stimulus payment of \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples) or an amount equal to a taxpayer's tax liability, whichever was less. Tax liability is the net amount of federal income taxes paid after deductions and credits. If people had no tax liability but had at least \$3,000 of "qualifying income" from specific sources, they would be eligible for \$300 (\$600 for married couples). There also is a \$300 payment for each qualifying child.

- **Amended return** - Generally, people cannot file an amended return solely to get an economic stimulus payment unless they are a retiree, veteran or have other "qualifying income." While amended returns will be processed to correct the income, deductions and income tax as appropriate, the economic stimulus payment amount will not be adjusted based on an amended return. If people do not receive a payment this year, they can claim it when they file their tax return in 2009.

- **Use most current address** - People must use their most current address in order to receive a timely payment. People who change addresses after filing should complete Form 8822 and a change of address card with the U.S. Postal Service. If the postal service is unable

to deliver the payment, it is returned to the IRS.

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